

LIMESTONE COUNTY

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PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increase number of juvenile probation officers to meet the mandated standard and an office assistant
2. New building for local health department
3. Family Resource Center

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county.

Health - Children's (0 - 19)

physical and mental well-being in the county.

New building is needed for local health department

Policy Council Action Steps:

- publicize need for additional space for services due to population growth and needs in our community
- investigate grant resources
- approach community leaders as to possible site for new building

Have a psychiatrist available at all hours of the day or night to provide emergency mental assessments of children

Policy Council Action Steps:

- publicize unavailability of treatment for children
- meet with legislative delegation
- contact advocates nationally

Increase state residential mental health treatment beds for children

Policy Council Action Steps:

- work with Probate Office's plan for similar adult services
- coordinate services between Mental Health and other agencies
- establish a Family Resource Center as a satellite base for the provider

Safety - Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Increase number of juvenile probation officers to meet the mandated standard (3-5) and an office assistant

Policy Council Action Steps:

- publicize state's lack of funding to meet the needs of our children.
- lobby for release of Trust funds being held.
- encourage equitable distribution of juvenile office positions within Administrative Office of Courts

Provide out-patient intensive drug rehabilitative programs locally for our youth

Policy Council Action Step (s):

- visit other similar programs
- enlist community volunteers to include retired teachers and college students
- coordinate with Boys and Girls Club mentoring programs

Create gang prevention program targeting Hispanic youth

Policy Council Action Step (s):

- work with Limestone county youth services unit to identify vulnerable youth and prevent school drop outs
- seek grants resources to identify problems
- seek assistance from local churches, civic groups and businesses and encourage multicultural acceptance interaction among all youth

Education - Children

learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Continue the Limestone County youth services unit which includes School resources officers, truancy/drop out programs and accountability for juveniles on probation and expand the program to city schools

Policy Council Action Steps:

- continue to seek adequate funds
- include city schools in program
- fine tune program so that referral procedures will be uniform throughout the school system targeting early intervention

Combine city and county alternative schools so that more services could be accessed and better separation of age groups

Policy Council Action Steps:

- investigate programs in other areas
- create subcommittee to discuss feasibility and make proposals
- identify programs that could be offered-anger management, drug prevention, tutoring resources and independent living skills

Provide an alternative diploma program for children who have dropped out of school or who are failing or habitually truant after their sophomore year

Policy Council Action Steps:

- investigate programs in other areas
- create a committee to discuss facility and make proposals
- identify courses of study to include literacy, remedial math, independent skills and vocational training as well as attend school

Continue referrals to the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation services transition counselor to insure children and adults with disabilities reach their maximum employment potential

Policy Council Action Steps:

- refer children and adults with disabilities
- email transition counselor
- identify courses of study to include GED (reimbursement), employment readiness training, social skills, money management, work benefits, learners license permit, driver's license, job development and placement, work clothes, tools and assist in paying fees for birth certificate, social security card, learners license permit and drivers license.

Early Care and Education - Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Provide child-care facilities for indigent or low-income working parents

Policy Council Action Steps:

- coordinate child-care facilities with pre-kindergarten programs
- canvas area for resources
- seek community support and volunteers

Early Intervention (parenting, pre-natal, job-training) for Hispanic women with children ages 0-5

Policy Council Action Steps:

- make English as a second-language more accessible and include Guatemalan dialects
- make community services language friendly
- work with local churches to identify clients and provide location for services

Develop a program to provide funds to indigent families with children between ages 0-5 for emergency medical attention, medication and transportation to appointments

Policy Council Action Steps:

- seek church and community services
- encourage aggressive program to enlist parents to sign-up children for Medicaid and All Kids
- canvas community with interpreters explaining availability to Hispanic families

Continue Alabama Department of Rehabilitation services for children and adults with disabilities to maximize their potential

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Contact Huntsville children rehabilitation services (see pamphlet)
- Encourage aggressive program enlist parents to sign-up children for ADRS
- Provide community with Spanish brochure with interpreters explaining availability to Hispanic families

Economic Security

- Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Workforce investment act program should be resurrected and offered to our county

Policy Council Action Steps:

- members should find out what our county needs to do to return the program
- program should be better publicized from the beginning
- congressmen should be contacted

Expand work release program to better include child support detainees and interface with workforce investment act

Policy Council Action Steps:

- work with Sheriff's department to develop ways for better enforcement
- interagency meetings with child support unit
- publicize efforts to collect child support

Develop a program for young indigent parents for job-training, parenting and independent living skills

Policy Council Action Steps:

- provide family resource center for classroom site
- visit programs in other areas
- seek grant funding

Continue Alabama Department of Rehabilitation services to insure Alabama children and adults with disabilities reach their maximum employment potential

Policy Council Action Steps:

- provide meeting site for those no longer attending school

Parent Involvement and Skills

- Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Make support services available to parents locally rather than sending them to Huntsville or Decatur

Policy Council Action Steps:

- develop a Family Resource Center
- locate a structure for the center
- secure satellite services in drug and alcohol treatment, domestic violence, prevention, visitation supervision, anger management classes and other programs

Identify special needs children earlier and provide supportive training for parents

Policy Council Action Steps:

- form an interagency task force
- visit similar programs in our area
- coordinate with Limestone county youth services unit to implement services

Continue local parenting classes

Policy Council Action Steps:

- investigate funding sources
- provide a Family Resource Center for classroom
- visit other programs to get ideas for expansion or improvement

Policy Recommendation

1. Increase state funding for children's program
2. Lessen grant competitive process between counties and entities so that there will be united statewide planning and sustainability for children's services
3. Provide adequate number of juvenile probation officers and staff to meet statutory recommendations
4. Increase state residential mental health treatment beds for children
5. Increase programs for intensive outpatient drug and alcohol rehabilitative programs for youth
6. Have a city/county alternative school, separating age groups and provide support services for children and families
7. State program providing alternative diploma program for children who have dropped out of school or who are failing or habitually truant after their sophomore year
8. Child care subsidies for indigent parents
9. Family resource centers for rural areas where low-income families can access satellite service providers
10. Reinstitute Workforce investment act for job training and placement, literacy and remedial education.